MERCEDES DYER

ESTABLISHING RIVER PLATE SANITARIUM

roots in the origins of Seventh-day Adventist penetration into South America.

From 1885 onward a number of immigrants from Europe almost simultaneously began keeping the seventh-day Sabbath in different parts of the South American continent. There were small groups among the French, Swiss, Italian, and Spanish colonists in Uruguay, Chile, and in several Argentine provinces. In Entre Rios, the province between the Uruguay and Parana Rivers in Argentina, a number of Russian-Germans received the Sabbath message. Names of some of these early believers have been prominent among the Adventist leaders in South America for nine decades.

ON A CLEAR evening River Plate Sanitarium and River Plate College are visible for a distance of many miles. These two institutions, which stand upon a slight elevation surrounded by wheat and flax fields in the fertile rolling plains of the province of Entre Rios, Argentina, are situated about twenty-five miles out in the country from the provincial capital of Parana.

For more than three-quarters of a century they have sought to witness to the wisdom of Ellen G. White's counsel that schools and sanitariums should be established in the country. There, she stated, people might enjoy nature's healing properties, receive instruction in the care of the body, practice healthful living by working in the open air, and experience the transforming power of the gospel message through the study of God's word.

The development and growth of these two institutions has made possible the expansion of Seventh-day Adventism in South America. Before the turn of the twentieth century a school, which became the Camarero School, located on land donated by one of the German-Russian farmers of Entre Rios was begun. In time it developed into River Plate College. In 1908, just ten years after the school first started, the foundations for a sanitarium were beginning to take shape. The story of the development of this medical center is a progressive one, and it has its

Mercedes Dyer serves as chairman of the Department of Education at Andrews University.

In 1890 George Riffel wrote the General Conference that there were twenty Adventists in Entre Rios and asked that a missionary be sent. Riffel had immigrated to Argentina ten years earlier from Russia by way of Brazil, but had been driven out by grasshopper invasions, which consumed his crops for two successive years. He emigrated to the United States and settled in Kansas, where he became a Seventh-day Adventist. In 1888 he returned to Entre Rios with three other Adventist families who were also from Russia and shared his new faith with friends he had left behind.

The General Conference Mission Board took notice of Riffel's call for help. Three colporteurs, Elwin W. Snyder, C. A. Nowlin, and A. B. Stauffer went as the first missionaries to the area in 1891. They had to support themselves with their sales, and since they had no Spanish books, nor could they speak that language, they were forced to use a translator or seek out the English and German speaking colonists with whom they could communicate. Within their first years they made good sales so long as English and Protestant people were accessible. But there were so few such people that the canvassers scoured the country from Brazil to Patagonia and even covered the Falkland Islands searching out the English-speaking people.

THE COLPORTEURS WON a number of converts, including Lionel Brooking, a twenty-one year old English railroad mechanic apprentice who had been a YMCA worker in Buenos Aires. He joined them as the fourth Adventist literature evangelist in South America.

The next person to be sent by the Seventh-day Adventist Mission Board was Richard B. Craig. He

The Riffel family served with three other families in Entre Rios for many years. George Riffel (far right) is responsible for writing to the General Conference in 1890 and requesting more workers for the area.

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arrived in March, 1893, to direct the canvassing work and to be in charge of the book depository. He held an institute for the four colporteurs during 1894.

The first Seventh-day Adventist minister to enter South America was Frank H. Westphal. He was called by the Mission Board to be superintendent of the East Coast Mission, which embraced Argentina, Uruguay, Paraguay, and Brazil, and he sailed from New York on July 18, 1894. After visiting England he stopped at several ports along the Brazilian coast. His brother-in-law, William H. Thurston, took the same boat on his way to Rio de Janeiro to also begin mission work for the church.

The Westphals arrived in Buenos Aires on August 18. Richard Craig met them, helped them through customs, and lodged them in his home. After a week of getting settled, Westphal left his wife and two small children in Buenos Aires while he sought out and baptized the new believers in the provinces of Entre Rios, Santa Fe, Corrientes, and even in Brazil. Everywhere he went he preached the gospel, taught the people, and baptized the believers.

During his first thirteen months in his new field Westphal was home barely six weeks. After an extended trip he returned to Buenos Aires and found that his little daughter had contracted measles and then scarlet fever and had died. She had been buried in the Chacarita Cemetery two weeks before. A missionary from another denomination had helped with the burial services.

The missionary family in South America increased again in 1895. Lucy B. Post from Ohio was asked to do Bible work in Argentina, but was first to spend a couple of years in Uruguay. John McCarthy, who was an Argentinian and had returned home from a study period in the United States, was granted missionary credentials by the General Conference. Ole Oppegard arrived in Buenos Aires on October 8 of that same year. He was a Norwegian who had studied nursing at Battle Creek. He sold books and did medical missionary work among the English and Scandinavians south of Buenos Aires. Jean Vuilleumiers, an ordained minister, also came with Oppegard to work among the French-speaking people.

In the middle of 1896, Nelson Z. Town, who had been canvassing in Scotland since 1891, joined the Adventist family as secretary-treasurer of the mission; his wife accompanied him. About this time the Westphals rented a large eighteen-room house in the city of Buenos Aires, which served as the mission headquarters and was, according to Town, large enough so that the Adventist workers could all live under one roof.

Town and Westphal observed the needs of the people. Many were unable to read or write, especially in the rural areas, and there were few physicians to care for the sick. The country people showed a woeful lack of knowledge about health and the care of the body. Very few of the rural children had opportunities for an education. Obviously, schools and medical workers were badly needed.

AS EARLY AS 1896 Town appealed to the General Conference Mission Board for medical workers and teachers. "We are looking eagerly forward to the time when a good physician and some missionary nurses may be sent to this field," he wrote. Then he anxiously awaited the arrival of the *General Conference Bulletin*, hoping that he would read the news of actions taken "with regard to sending

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Pictured in this photograph of early Argentinian workers are: (first row, seated l-r) F. H. Westphal, O. Oppegard, N. Z. Town, (second row, standing l-r) J. Vuilleumier, and E. W. Snyder.

medical help and teachers to this field." Calls like this, however, were coming to the Mission Board from Central America, Syria, Egypt, and Palestine. The Philippines, India, and China were also unopened fields. Physicians were being considered for these.

Arthur G. Daniells, chairman of the Seventh-day Adventist Mission Board in 1901, wrote on August 8, 1901, to Dr. Robert Habenicht, who was practicing medicine and teaching at the school of nursing at the Iowa Sanitarium which he directed:

> I am pleased to learn from your letter of July 28 to Bro. Spicer that you are ready to go to the regions afar off to give the light of this message to people who are in darkness. I almost feared you would not be willing to give up your prospects at Colfax for the uncertainties of a missionary field, but I see that you are ready to go.

He cautioned the family to consider the field where they should go:

> . . . You will, of course, go abroad to stay until the Lord comes or until He calls you to some other field. You have a wide range. By that I refer to the fact that you are both preacher and doctor . . . I would say go where you will find territory and people enough to make use of your experience and preparation for useful service for a great while--that is until the end . . .

The Mission Board had suggested that they go to Central America, but Daniells wrote that he and William A. Spicer, secretary of the Mission Board, had been talking about other fields, perhaps Bombay, South America, or the Philippines. Daniells suggested that they look up facts regarding these countries and

> . . . please give the question prayerful study . . . The Lord will direct and then if you are faithful you will be kept and blessed. Don't rush off too hurriedly.

Spicer also wrote the Habenichts on August 8 and asked that they consider the Philippines, Egypt, Syria, and Palestine, where work had begun with the German colonists around Jaffa. Dr. Habenicht's knowledge of the German language would be a great help in that field. "And there is China and beyond is India," he added. South America was also calling for physicians and both Argentina and Brazil were the home of many German settlers. "But," added Spicer, "thus far the way has been closed because of the fact that the examinations for medical registration must be taken in Spanish."

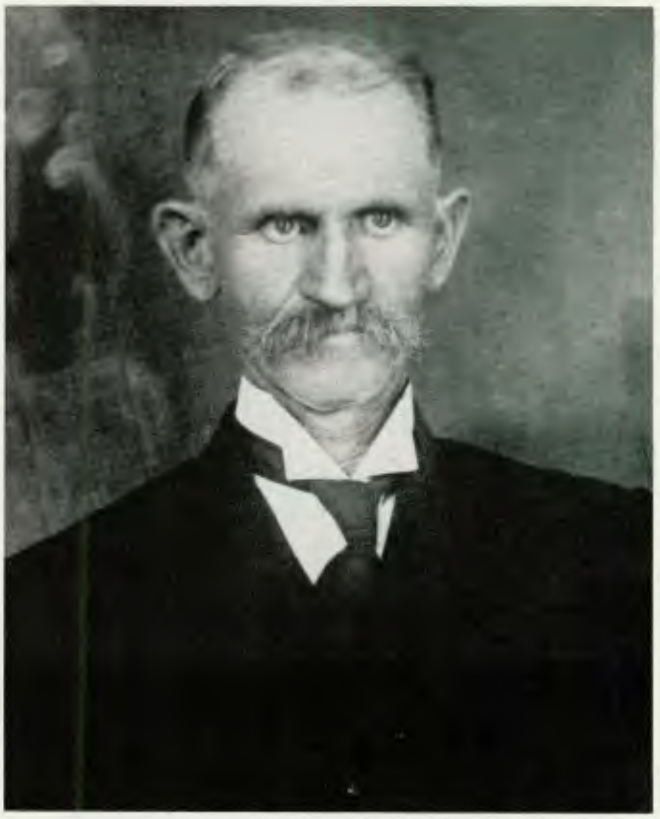
The Mission Board encouraged workers to choose their own field of labor, Spicer continued:

> . . . We do feel anxious that every man find just the place that God has for him . . . If you have decided convictions . . . please write the Mission Board at Battle Creek to this effect.

He closed by saying:

> Am glad you have the little ones to take with you into the fields. The home is a powerful influence in the needy lands abroad and even the children are missionaries indeed . . .

The Habenichts chose to go to South America and sailed from New York the last of October, 1901. They stopped in England, since no steamers went directly to South America from New York. They arrived in Buenos Aires on December 2. Eight days



Dr. Robert H. Habenicht was instrumental in helping to build and administer River Plate Sanitarium and devoted twenty-two years of his life to the work there.

Courtesy Mercedes Dyer

later their daughter Liria was born; Judson was nine and Cleo was two. They had lost Roberta at the age of four just a few years earlier.

They planned to set up treatment rooms in Buenos Aires and work while learning the Spanish language in preparation for the qualifying examinations. But this was not possible, so they proceeded on to Entre Rios in January. The train trip to Rosario, the second largest city of the country, was a rather uncomfortable trip, for it entailed sitting on wood-slat seats and avoiding the sparks which flew in the open windows from the wood-burning engine. Passengers had to keep alert that their clothing did not catch fire. From Rosario a river steamer took them up the Parana River to Diamante, Entre Rios. A horse-drawn Russian wagon took them from the Diamante harbor up the long, steep bank into the city. Then they moved across the fields and valleys, fording streams and rivers and bumping from one rut to another for the remaining fourteen miles to the Adventist school. The whole trip took about thirty-six hours.

CRESPO, ENTRE RIOS, had been suggested as a place to set up medical practice. This farming community was the home of the Riffels and other Russian-German believers. Elder Westphal had organized the first Seventh-day Adventist church there in 1894. This was the place where, on September 15, 1898, plans were drawn up for the Camarero School, which was located about ten miles from Crespo near the small village of Puiggari and across the creek from the Camarero trading store.

A concentration of Adventist believers was scattered around the Crespo area. Dr. Habenicht decided to begin his medical practice in this community. But before setting up his clinic in the village, he needed to secure permission from the local authorities in the provincial capital of Parana.

Dr. Habenicht talked with the local druggist who spoke German, and who seemed very anxious that Habenicht begin work in the village. He offered to go to Parana to help Habenicht secure the permit. They agreed to go the distance of about thirty miles together.

Because Habenicht did not understand the Spanish language and did not speak German very well, he confided with Westphal, who was living in the vicinity, that he did not feel clear to go alone with the druggist. Westphal arranged that John Maas, who had only recently arrived to work at the new Camarero School, should accompany the doctor.

When Maas and Habenicht arrived at the station as appointed, the druggist must have been surprised to see someone with Habenicht. He decided that he would drive rather than take the train as they had planned, but he insisted that Habenicht and Maas take the train. They thought that if the druggist was going to drive, they would drive too. Then the druggist changed his mind again and told them he would take the train and meet them in Parana the next day at an appointed hour and place.

After all night in the horse-drawn wagon, Maas and Habenicht arrived at the specified place in Parana. They found that the druggist had come and had gone with the early morning train. Neither could make himself understood, for they did not speak Spanish. However, in a restaurant they met a German gentleman with whom they could communicate. He found an English-speaking man to help them. This man proved to be the British proconsul. He knew all about the druggist. The proconsul explained that the druggist had been acting the part of a doctor and did not want any competition. Knowing Habenicht could not speak Spanish, he thought he could prevent his getting the permission needed to practice. The druggist had already been to see the president of the health board before their arrival. The proconsul gave the two missionaries a letter of introduction to the health official and sent an interpreter with them. In a few minutes Habenicht had the required permission and he and Maas rejoiced all the way back to Crespo.

On March 1, 1902, Habenicht officially opened a medical office in Crespo. It was in one of two rooms that the Habenicht family occupied as living quarters. The first patient who initiated the medical services was the "comisario," the chief officer of the village.

Almost immediately Dr. and Mrs. Habenicht were busy. Sometimes they had as many as thirty to forty office calls and treatments in one day. Four or five wagons frequently stood in front of their door. The sick, many of whom had been driven long distances, waited on straw covered wagon beds. One man, who had been paralyzed for four years and had been to all the large cities for help, had been pronounced hopeless. He was brought in and rapidly recovered with the treatments he received. A patient with a fast growing tumor had the tumor successfully removed and returned home well. A blind patient had a cataract removed and went away rejoicing because his sight had been restored. With these successes, the Adventist doctor was gaining a reputation. People were coming from the neighboring towns, cities, and surrounding country.

AT THE END of his first month's work, Dr. Habenicht wrote that he had secured another house nearby, which he was using for his office and treatment rooms. He was kept busy and said he needed help. Although the country had been ravaged with locusts and the people had lost all their crops, he had taken in over three hundred pesos and stated

that the Lord was blessing his efforts.

To help Habenicht, Lionel Brooking, who had been colporteuring since his conversion to Adventism, left for Battle Creek and spent two years training at the sanitarium. By 1902 he had returned to assist Dr. Habenicht with the treatments.

Two afternoons a week Habenicht traveled the ten miles by horseback or wagon to the new Adventist Camarero School near Puiggari. He taught vocal music, physiology, and simple treatments to the eighteen students enrolled. Evenings were devoted to language study. After five months he was teaching the Sabbath School lessons in Spanish. His German had improved enough so that he was preaching in that language.

On August 19, 1902, Town wrote to the *Review and Herald* that the work was being blessed by the Lord.

> . . . As we are now right in the time of wheat sowing, we have proposed to the brethern that they put in a crop for the Lord, to help in starting a medical institution in this field. About one hundred and thirty acres of wheat and flax have been promised toward this . . . Dr. Habenicht has the Spanish language sufficiently to be able to take his examination . . .

With the growing fame of the Adventist country doctor, physicians in the provincial capital and the surrounding cities were becoming alarmed. They did not want this kind of competition. Opposition from the medical ranks was threatening the growth of any permanent kind of medical institution.

Town wrote that medical work had been put off too long. Formerly in Argentina, immigrant physicians had been allowed to take a general examination that would earn them a license to practice anywhere in the country. Up until May, 1902, Uruguay would still permit the general examinations. But Argentina had recently passed a new law. It required all foreign doctors to pass examinations in each year's course work studied by the students in the medical schools in Argentina. Paraguay had also passed the same demanding laws and now Uruguay had completely barred all foreign doctors and chemists from practicing in their country. No new physicians were allowed to take the examination or work in Uruguay.

Dr. Habenicht's medical permit allowed him to practice in the rural areas where no other physician was available. He continued to care for the sick who came to him or called for him. But all the time there was strong opposition from the medical circles in the cities.

Westphal reported to the General Conference in Washington, D. C. on May 15, 1905, that Dr. Habenicht was having

> . . . many difficulties in securing recognition. His time is being divided between ministerial work and private practice. We hope that he will soon receive the necessary paper from the government.

DENOMINATIONAL LEADERS HAD hoped that a sanitarium could be built in the city, where the attention of the people would be called to the Adventist work. But the national laws were restrictive. Furthermore, there was much prejudice against the "Sabatistas." People who were against the Adventist work circulated rumors to keep patients away. Habenicht's life was threatened a number of times. He wrote in the December 6, 1906, *Review* that:

> I have spent some time in trying to revalidate my medical diploma in this country, but for the present have had to give up the idea of receiving national recognition because of the prejudice against North Americans, especially those who are professionals. One of the secretaries told me that it was useless to try, as they would not allow me to pass; but this was not till I had spent three months and had visited the offices more than fifty times to get the privilege to try the examination.

Although he was greatly disappointed in not getting national licensing for medical practice, Dr. Habenicht was not discouraged. He combined ministerial work with the medical work, often taking extended missionary trips throughout the northern provinces of Argentina and into Paraguay. He related that this was wild country, with mountains to cross, crocodiles in the rivers, and monkeys in the trees, but worst of all were the tigers and the snakes. He had to be alert to dangers on every side, underfoot, and overhead. On his return from these trips, he reported that new believers had been baptized, Sabbath Schools had been organized, and interested persons were getting ready for baptism. He preached the gospel everywhere and held public meetings, presenting the prophecies and the distinctive Adventist beliefs. He visited from house to house, treating the sick, holding Bible studies, and teaching people how to better care for their bodies and keep healthy. His work opened doors in many places. He wrote in the *General Conference Bulletin* for June 7, 1909:

> If we could only have the proper workers, there is no limit to this kind of work which the Lord could do through us. If we had hundreds of people properly trained, in whose hearts the love of this message is the first thing, we could place them all over the field, and they would be lights wherever they are.

The work was an integrated missionary work of caring for the whole person. Habenicht described his method as follows: after he had given a few simple remedies and treatments to a sick person, he spoke to the people who stood by. There were always the curious who wondered what the doctor would do. He would say, "Our sick man is better; why can not we have a little meeting?" He would ask the man of the house for permission, and then talk about the goodness of God, how Jesus would take away sins, and then he would read the thirty-

Courtesy Loma Linda University Heritage Room

Construction of the sanitarium at Entre Rios continued only as quickly as funds were received to purchase the necessary materials.

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At the time this photograph was taken the roads around the sanitarium had not yet been paved.

second Psalm. After the meeting, he announced that if others were ill, he would be happy to visit them and help in any way he could. If some wanted Bible studies, he would visit them in their homes and study with them. This kind of ministry attracted so many people that at the evening meetings the house and yards would be overflowing.

Sometimes these medical missionary trips called for much ingenuity and endurance. Roads were non-existent in many areas, so cattle trails or paths along the riverbanks became the routes followed. Habenicht wrote in the same *General Conference Bulletin* that:

> Once we had to make a journey of about three days' ride; but the heavy rains made it impossible to cross the rivers, and we were greatly delayed, and found it almost impossible to get food, so that during the three days we had very little to eat. When we came to the swollen rivers, we had to swim across, and by means of a rope suspended across the river, would pull our things across, and get our horses over, and proceed on our way.

Dr. Habenicht was finally granted permission to take a general examination in Parana which qualified him to practice in the province of Entre Rios. The provisions of the regulation, however, indicated that if a national doctor should come to the vicinity, he would have to leave.

IN 1907 HABENICHT purchased about 180 acres of land and built a two-story home with eight rooms, a kitchen, and a bathroom. The home was beside the Camarero School. At this time, Habenicht was also acting director of the school and continued his practice in his home. He described what life was like in the June 2, 1909, *General Conference Bulletin*:

> . . . we could not go to bed during the whole week. I have sometimes traveled sixty miles in a wagon to see a patient, and upon returning home have found as high as ten wagons waiting for me, with their patients, or a wagon waiting to take me off again fifty miles or so in another direction. Sometimes Mrs. Habenicht would be called to attend some other person while I was away, and the children would be left alone until one of us returned. And when we got back, the people were filling the house, as high as eighty coming in one day.

The Habenichts had five children by this time; Robert Harvey and Herald Ambrose had been born in 1905 and 1906 respectively. At times the house was so filled with patients that everyone had to watch where they stepped.

The Habenicht's dining room served as operating room and at times they had to clear off the dishes from the table to prepare for an operation to take place there. Surgical instruments were sterilized in the kitchen oven. Judson, the oldest son, helped by giving the anesthetic. It became impossible to work in these facilities with such a lack of help. A sanitarium had to be built.

At the annual meeting of the Conference of Gualequay, October 17-27, 1907, action was taken to construct a sanitarium in connection with the school at Camarero. A governing board was appointed. The amount of 2,910 pesos was promised at that meeting, plus about eighteen acres of flax, twenty acres of wheat, and four acres of oats. Habenicht donated 2,000 pesos. Contributions from Jose Weiss, Daniel Weiss, George Riffel, Oswaldo Frick, Enrique Block and his wife, and Godofredo Block, made up the remaining 910 pesos.

In March of 1908 a general meeting took place at Camarero, where it was decided that the conference should purchase Habenicht's farm as well as the eight-room house. The house, barn, and sixty acres would be for the new sanitarium and the other 120 acres of farm would belong to the school. A sanitarium committee was organized with Habenicht, Westphal, Town, Jorge Lust, and George Riffel as members. The name selected for the new institution was Sanatorio Adventista del Plata, or River Plate Sanitarium.

Walton C. John arrived in the middle of the year to take over the principalship of the school; thus,

Habenicht was relieved of that responsibility and could fully devote his energies to the new sanitarium and the medical work.

Another meeting was held in July of 1908. The conference officials reaffirmed that the local needs and the private practice which Habenicht had built up demanded that an institution be provided. A plan for a new building was adopted. It was to have two stories and be about seventy-five by thirty-five feet in dimension. The committee voted to begin construction just as soon as 6,000 more pesos could be gathered. They launched a campaign to raise money. Masons were already making bricks nearby on the bank of the river. The executive board voted that Habenicht should furnish wood for baking the brick.

Trees had been planted in April to beautify the area which had formerly been completely cleared of all natural vegetation in order to be sown with grain. On September 21, 1908, the sanitarium committee approved that the row of trees be divided between the sanitarium and the college, and that each institution pay for its half. It also voted that the school should irrigate the trees at least once a week.

Among other actions taken on September 21, 1908, were the following: to build a six thousand liter cylindrical water tank, to hire masons to construct the foundations for the new building, to purchase six single beds, mattresses and bedding, and to request the school to make available for sanitarium use a man, wagon, and four horses.

The following week the sanitarium committee accepted twenty-four articles delineating the administrative relationship of the school, the farm, and the sanitarium. Each would be administered independently, but should cooperate by lending wagons, horses, and help to each other as needed. Charges were fixed for rents and meals for the employees. Dr. Habenicht was allowed to pasture his two horses and two cows in the acreage which he had sold. He was also permitted, on October 1, to rent five rooms of his former home; rent payments of twenty-five pesos a month were assessed. Two rooms downstairs, one upstairs, and the two vestibules were reserved for housing employees of the sanitarium.

EACH WEEK THE sanitarium committee met to decide the details of the construction, to hire workers, and to secure material needed for the new building. They drew up policies, rules, and prices for wages, rents, meals, and medical services. They authorized the printing of stationery and receipt books. There were many decisions that had to be worked out in the weekly committee sessions that followed.

On October 29, 1908, Westphal proposed that a nursing course be organized consisting of three years of study. The students would help with the work of caring for the patients while learning nursing practices. They would be required to work eight hours a day their first year. Any overtime would be paid at the rate of ten centavos an hour. The sanitarium would furnish each student with two uniforms a year and ten pesos to buy their shoes. Sabbath work was to be reduced to a minimum, and no wages would be paid for work on God's holy day. It was decided that the course would begin on November 15, 1908. The first students accepted were Ida Hofer, Elvira Deggeller, Hannah Frick and Juan Cappeler, in that order.

The following week the executive committee had a long and interesting discussion of problems and plans. Habenicht and Westphal were commissioned to purchase immediately the beds and furniture needed.

Arthur Westphal was hired to be in charge of the records and Juan Montcreol was employed as mason. Other masons were also secured. French tile was selected for the floors of the sanitarium. Mrs. Habenicht and Mrs. Westphal were asked to look for a stove and kitchen equipment as well as the needed utensils for the dining room.

On November 15, 1908, the sanitarium officially opened with General Eduardo Racedo as the first patient. River Plate Sanitarium was becoming a reality.

Dr. Habenicht dedicated his energies to the construction of the building, the school of nursing program, and the care of the many patients who continually came for help. He also began a new home for his own family near the one which he had sold to the new institution. Hopes were running high that the vision of seven years was finally being transformed into brick and mortar.

In November, when classes at the school terminated for the summer, the rooms in the school building were made available for patients. Within

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Among the delegates from South America that attended the 1909 General Conference in Washington, D. C., was Dr. Habenicht.

ten days every room on campus was filled to capacity, some rooms crowded with up to fifteen people.

Since there were no nurses yet, Dr. and Mrs. Habenicht gave all the treatments. Because it was more than they could care for, they requested help. Mr. and Mrs. Armando Hammerly, graduate nurses from the Adventist hospital in Gland, Switzerland, who were residing in Uruguay, came to assist with the treatments and nursing care. Also, Dr. Abel L. Gregory from Brazil and Dr. George Replogle from the United States were called along with two nurses from the States.

When March rolled around, the students returned for another school year. The patients had to be moved back into the old sanitarium, which was the former Habenicht home. Construction of the new building was progressing as the money came in to secure materials. As soon as a new room was finished sufficiently to accomodate patients, the room was occupied.

After Doctors Gregory and Replogle arrived in early 1909, Dr. Habenicht and his family left for the United States on March 6 to attend the General Conference session in San Francisco and to visit their family in Iowa. While the Habenichts were away, a representative from the Health Commission in Parana arrived at the sanitarium. Because neither Gregory nor Replogle were holding Argentine licenses to practice medicine, the health commissioner closed the sanitarium. City physicians, who were so opposed to the competition they were getting from the Adventist doctors, had heard of Dr. Habenicht's absence and had taken advantage of their opportunity to hinder the Adventist work by urging this action upon the health officers.

MR. AND MRS. Hammerly then left for Uruguay to begin medical missionary work there. Dr. Gregory remained for a short time and then also left. Though they were discouraged, the conference leaders continued the building and hoped for the soon return of Dr. Habenicht.

By July General Racedo had intervened and secured permission for the institution to reopen its doors. When Habenicht returned in August, patients started coming again. Before the windows or doors were in the new building, the patients were occupying the rooms.

The first floor was completed and filled with thirty patients by the end of 1909. The kitchen, dining room, and massage treatment rooms still were located in the old building, the former Habenicht home. Quarters were so cramped that meals were served in three turns.

Since there was much work and few to do it, patients who could work were given domestic duties or were assigned to help in the kitchen. Laundry

Courtesy Loma Linda University Heritage Room

This picture postcard of the sanitarium shows the porch and balcony area of the front of the building.

facilities consisted of a tin shed, where clothes were rubbed and then boiled in large kettles outside. At times the nursing students were assigned to laundry duty.

An addition was built onto the main building to house the kitchen and a storage room, and at the beginning of 1910, the medical offices, dining room, and kitchen were moved from the old building to the new one. Things were improving. A new well was dug and water was pumped with a gasoline motor.

Louis R. Conradi from the General Conference visited the school and sanitarium in late November, 1910. After his thirty-six hour trip up the mighty La Plata River to Diamante Harbor, he traveled through the country roads where for miles he could see a light in the distance. He was informed that it came from the Adventist institution. At that time the school had eighty students and the sanitarium had space for forty in-patients in its two almost completed stories. Conradi wrote in the May 11, 1911, *Review* that:

> The school building itself is a creditable structure, in keeping with the general style of architecture in the country . . . As for the sanitarium, I found a new two-story brick building nearly completed, with sufficient room for about forty patients . . .

Conradi was impressed with the amount and quality of work that was being done with very limited facilities. He must have enjoyed a bath and massage treatment, for he described them in detail:

> . . .All this bath-room contained was a small stove to heat the water, a bath-tub, three massage tables, and a small dressing corner. With this meager equipment the room was crowded. The door opened directly outdoors; and when the wind blew, the patient felt it immediately. Notwithstanding all these drawbacks, the sanitarium was prospering . . .

Both the college (background) and the sanitarium (foreground) can be seen in this photograph which was taken about 1917. Courtesy Mercedes Dyer

By the 1920's when this aerial view was taken, the sanitarium and school campus included a number of buildings. Credit Southern Publishing Association

> The doctors are often called out into the surrounding country, and . . . when I accompanied Dr. Habenicht on his calls, I noticed that everybody seemed to be acquainted with him; and from the hearty greetings received one could see that he was held in kind regard by Protestants and Catholics alike.

Conradi also mentioned the "plain and nutritious food" and that the matron tried to make the patients as comfortable as possible. Money had been promised from the General Conference for this institution and Conradi noted that it was "surely needed; and when received, it will place the sanitarium on its feet financially."

Physicians in the cities found their clientele diminishing, for patients were increasingly patronizing the River Plate Sanitarium for their medical needs. These physicians were instrumental in getting a law passed to restrict the growth of the sanitarium. Spicer visited in 1912 and reported in the May 9, 1912, *Review* that a law had been passed permitting only twenty-five in-patients. He added, "The house has this number now, and there are more than a dozen others in outbuildings . . . Our brethern thank God that the law recognizes their work even to this extent, and hope to see the restriction removed."

The newspaper publicity aroused the people in the area and they, with the help of important governmental friends of the sanitarium, had the law annulled. The publicity really helped the sanitarium, for during that year there were often as many as forty-five in-patients.

The first class of seven nurses graduated in 1912. Five entered medical missionary work: one among the Indians of Peru, two in the northern provinces of Argentina, and two in the local Argentine conference. The sanitarium employed the other two.

The sanitarium was beginning to see the realization of its objectives. Prejudice was being overcome and the institution was prospering. Graduates were carrying the medical missionary torch to the lands afar.

DR. CARL WESTPHAL joined Doctors Habenicht and Replogle in 1920. His diploma was readily recognized since his medical training was taken in Chile. Dr. Habenicht had finally received recognition equal to that of national licensure, but the attitude of the Latin countries made the sanitarium officials very aware that future growth of the medical work in South America was dependent upon the preparation of nationals to carry the leadership. The sanitarium graduates opened doors for the church throughout the continent with their self-supporting missionary services.

In 1923 Dr. Habenicht's health failed. He came to the United States hoping to recover and then return, but his years of untiring labor had spent his energies. Expecting that his health would allow him to begin a self-supporting school and sanitarium in Brazil, he sailed for Sao Paulo in August of 1925. His daughter Cleo and her husband Idylio Brouchy--both sanitarium graduates--were running a medical treatment center there. But on September 21, just three weeks after he had arrived in Sao Paulo, Dr. Habenicht died and was laid to rest.

Dr. Carl Westphal became the medical director of River Plate Sanitarium in 1923 and served in that capacity for thirty-one of the forty-five years he practiced medicine. Much of the time he was the only physician at the sanitarium. There were hard times and economic crises during these years, but he continued the work and carried on the nursing school. During the later years of his administration better days came and expansion of the facilities

Courtesy Review and Herald Publishing Association

Dr. Carl Westphal came to River Plate Sanitarium in 1920 and continued to work there until shortly before his death in 1965.

Dr. Carl Westphal (seated in the center) and Dr. Marcelo Hammerly (in the white coat to the right of Dr. Westphal) posed with the staff and student nurses for a photograph in 1950. Courtesy Mercedes Dyer

To meet the growing demands placed upon it, the original sanitarium structure was expanded in the 1950's. Courtesy Mercedes Dyer

During Dr. Marcelo Hammerly's directorship (1954-1967) River Plate Sanitarium was modernized and enlarged with several expansions. Courtesy Mercedes Dyer

In the 1960's a further extension was necessary to care adequately for the increased number of patients. Courtesy Mercedes Dyer

began. He turned over the directorship in 1954; however, he continued working with the sanitarium until shortly before his death in 1965.

Dr. Marcelo Hammerly left Uruguay with his medical degree from the University of Montevideo in 1937. He assisted Dr. Westphal during difficult times for the institution and assumed directorship in 1954. During his administration the building was modernized and enlarged with several expansions. First class patient rooms were constructed and equipped with a heating and air-conditioning system. Telephones were installed in each room and with the arrival of public electric power to the

Courtesy Mercedes Dyer

A modern entrance greets the current visitor to the campus of River Plate College.

BELOW

The administration building of River Plate College appears much the same today as it did when originally built.

Courtesy Mercedes Dyer

Dr. Pedro Tabuenca, present director of the sanitarium has been associated with the sanitarium since 1954. Courtesy Mercedes Dyer

community in 1965, the use of electrical equipment and around-the-clock lights became possible. One improvement followed another.

Not only has Dr. Hammerly been a respected physician, professor, author, builder, and administrator, but he also continues to inspire young men and women to study medicine, dentistry, medical technology, pharmacology, and other medical specialties, in order to fulfill the needs of the growing sanitarium.

In 1967 Dr. Hammerly turned over the administration to Dr. Pedro Tabuenca in order to dedicate more of his time to clinical practice. Although Dr. Hammerly retired in 1973 after thirty-six years of service to the institution, he continues to give valuable help as he is called upon. He has influenced many throughout the continent by his numerous books and articles on family and community health.

Dr. Pedro Tabuenca, a graduate of the National University of Buenos Aires, came to the sanitarium in 1954 and worked closely with Dr. Westphal and Dr. Hammerly. His work continues that which was initiated and sustained by his three progenitors.

Significant changes and accomplishments have enhanced the progress of the sanitarium since 1967. A large three-story brick structure attached to the main building was completed. An olympic-size outdoor swimming pool provides a recreational facility. A staff of thirty physicians rotate for specializations in the United States and in Europe. The number of in-patients has so enlarged that reservations must be arranged well in advance for one of the 183 beds available in the sanitarium. Outpatients seek reservations in one of the three local hotels or in rooming houses which are always crowded.

The completion in 1969 of the Santa Fe-Parana tunnel under the Parana River and the hardtop roads from Parana and Diamante to the college and sanitarium community have connected these institutions to the outside world and the rest of the nation. An airstrip makes taxi plane service available from Rosario, Santa Fe, and other cities of the nation. The community has become an independent municipality with its own name, Villa Libertador San Martin.

River Plate College and River Plate Sanitarium are two institutions standing side by side. They

continue to cooperate in their mission of training workers to fulfill the gospel commission to all the world. After seventy years of training nurses, the sanitarium has turned over the nursing school to the college with the beginning of the 1978 school year. Both institutions are crowded and growing.

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PULPIT DON'TS

TAKEN FROM THE *REVIEW AND HERALD*, MARCH 30, 1886.

Don't preach more than sixty minutes.

Don't think to be immortal by being eternal.

Don't try to be eloquent; only try to be simple.

Don't preach your own doubt or the doubts of others. Your people have doubts enough of their own, and can always pick up more.

Don't preach science; not even the science of theology. Your pulpit is not a lecture platform, nor your church a classroom.

Don't try to be someone else. There is only one Person worth imitating; and the way to imitate Him is by living in Him.

Don't substitute gush for good sense, rhapsody for reason, and asseveration for argument. The Americans are a strong people, and they need a meat diet.

Don't mistake noise in a sermon for eloquence, or noise in a prayer for devotion.

Don't use the long prayer to tell your congregation the news of the week, or the Lord the latest discoveries in theology.

Don't try to save the truth; the truth can take care of itself: save men.

Don't try to be prudent; only try to be brave. Even Paul begged his friends to pray for him that he might speak boldly as he ought to speak.

Don't imagine that you are the Board of Deacons, the Board of Trustees, the church meeting, and the Society; you are only the pastor.

Don't forget that it always takes two to perpetuate a scandal; one to listen as well as one to speak.

Don't forget that it always takes two to make a quarrel; and--

Don't be one of the two.--*Christian Union.*